AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 5   (Cancelled)

6.   (Currently Amended) A method of responding to an information request from a client device, the method including the steps of<u>:</u>

<u>receiving the information request from the client device;</u>

wrapping the information request in at least one layer to produce a request ~~packet~~ <u>object</u>;

transmitting the request ~~packet~~ <u>object</u> over a distributed network comprising ~~first and~~ ~~second~~ <u>a plurality of</u> processing nodes<u>;</u>~~, and generating a response packet for transmission~~ ~~back to the client device via the distributed network for responding to the information~~ ~~request, wherein~~

<u>at a</u> ~~the~~ first <u>of said</u> processing node<u>s,</u> ~~performs~~ <u>performing</u> analysis of the information request stored on the request ~~packet~~ <u>object</u> to determine whether the first processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of ~~the~~ <u>a</u> response data ~~packet~~ <u>which is responsive to said information request,</u>~~;~~ and ~~wherein the first~~ ~~processing node adds~~ <u>adding</u> a routing layer to the request ~~packet~~ <u>object</u> containing routing information relating to a next stage in processing of the request ~~packet~~ <u>object whilst leaving</u> <u>said at least one layer of the request object intact and undisturbed</u> ~~to be performed by the~~ ~~second processing node,~~ ~~the~~ <u>said</u> first processing node determining the routing information contained in the routing layer in dependence upon only the ~~data packet~~ <u>request object</u> content<u>;</u>~~,and~~

<u>at a</u> ~~the~~ second <u>of said</u> processing node<u>s, performing analysis of the information</u> <u>request stored on the request object to determine whether said second processing node is able</u> <u>to process the information request and generate at least part of the response data which is</u> <u>responsive to said information request;</u> ~~processing the request packet whilst leaving at least~~ ~~one layer of the request packet intact and undisturbed;~~

<u>at least one of said first and second processing nodes processing the information</u> <u>request in the request object and generating at least part of the response data which is</u> <u>responsive to said information request and adding said response data to said request object;</u> and

transmitting back to said client device via said distributed network said request object, including said response data, for responding to the information request;~~,~~

wherein ~~the stop of generating~~ the request ~~response packet~~ object ~~generates the response packet to~~ further includes said information request.

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Currently Amended) A ~~network~~ method according to claim ~~7~~ 6, wherein the layers of the data ~~packet~~ object further include at least one layer selected from a group containing client device information, user identification information, and application identification information.

9.   (Currently Amended) A system for responding to an information request from a client device, the system including:

wrapping means configured to receive the information request from the client device and wrap the information request in at least one layer to produce a request object ~~packet~~ ;

first and second processing nodes;

transmitting means configured to transmit the request object ~~packet~~ over a distributed network comprising each of said processing nodes; ~~and~~

~~manes configured to generate a response packet for transmission back to the client device via the distributed network for responding to the information request;~~

wherein the first processing node is operable to perform ~~performs~~ analysis of the information request stored on the request object ~~packet~~ to determine whether the first processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of ~~the~~ a response data ~~packet~~ which is responsive to the information request, and includes means configured to add a further layer to the request object ~~packet~~ containing routing information relating to a next stage in processing of the request packet to be performed at the second processing node whilst leaving said at least one layer of the request packet intact and undisturbed, the first processing node determining the routing information contained in the routing layer in dependence only upon the request object ~~packet~~ content~~, and the second processing node processing the request packet whilst leaving said at least one layer of the request packet intact and undisturbed;~~ and

wherein the second processing node is operable to perform analysis of the information

request stored on the request object to determine whether said second processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request;

      means for processing the information request in the request object at at least one of said first and second processing nodes to generate at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request and for adding said response data to said request object; and

      means for transmitting back to said client device via said distributed network said request object, including said response data, for responding to said information request, said request object including said information request.

~~wherein the means configured to generate the response packet generates the response packet to include said information request.~~

10.   (New) A system according to claim 9, wherein the layers of the data object further include at least one layer selected from a group containing client device information, user identification information, and application identification information.

    This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.